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LETTER DATED 22 APRIL 1999 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

In my capacity as the Chairman of the Contact Group of the Organization of the Islamic Conference on Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosova, I have the honour to express the Group's deep concern about the increasing number of Sandjak Muslims who are being forced to flee, mostly to Bosnia and Herzegovina. We believe that this matter has also been brought to the attention of the Security Council by Elizabeth Rehn, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Coordinator of United Nations Operations in Bosnia and Herzegovina, on 20 April 1999.

Increasingly, the Muslims of the Sandjak region are now being victimized by an accelerated campaign of ethnic cleansing orchestrated by the authorities of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) and Serbia. In the last few days, several victims have been murdered. Others have been tortured or beaten. Legally elected officials from the Sandjak region, representatives to the Serbian Parliament and local functionaries have been beaten and prevented from exercising their responsibilities. Citizens from Sandjak are being forced to flee their homes. Tens of thousands are already in Bosnia and Herzegovina, overwhelming that country's already over-extended resources.

The campaign directed at the Sandjak Muslim population is very much similar to that suffered by the Albanian Kosovars. Once again, the religion of the targeted victims is the criterion for murder, torture and forced displacement. In the areas of the Sandjak within the Republic of Montenegro, Montenegrin law enforcement is prevented from asserting legalities and restoring civilian order by the forces of the Yugoslav Army.

We urge the Security Council to urgently address the situation in view of the consequences for both Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Sandjak population. We believe the crimes perpetrated there, by both regular Yugoslav Army and paramilitary forces, deserve the review of the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Hadi NEJAD HOSSEINIAN
Ambassador
Permanent Representative
Chairman of the OIC Contact Group on
Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosova